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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E JAMES LIDDLE  
PARIS FOR WALLACE BAIN  
LONDON FOR PETER LORD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2020

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MA](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER MALAGASY PRESIDENT ZAFY: PATIENT AND  
OBSTINATE

Classified By: AMBASSADOR NIELS MARQUARDT FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On February 4, Ambassador Marquardt met with former President Albert Zafy to discuss the latest developments in the ongoing political impasse. Zafy remains firm in his support for a return to the 2009 Maputo and Addis agreements, still clearly considers himself an equal partner in the process of political reconciliation, and sees little need for compromise on his part. He attributes the welcome change in France's position to a reported call from Zuma to Sarkozy. With international condemnation of de facto president Andry "TGV" Rajoelina growing in strength, he has nothing to gain by agitating, and nothing to lose by waiting patiently as the responsibility for continued deadlock is increasingly pinned on Rajoelina alone. Zafy seems to think that Rajoelina's days are numbered, and is probably waiting for him to fall. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Zafy stated that he has responded favorably to AU Chairperson Jean Ping's proposal for a return to negotiations, as it is largely based on a return to the agreements reached in Maputo and Addis Ababa from August to November 2009. For him, these agreements are the only acceptable starting point for resumed talks, although he indicated that he might have great difficulty accepting TGV as head of state, given his unilateral actions since December 12009. He did not say so explicitly, but left the impression that he does not expect TGV to last much longer, and is just waiting for him to fall. Zafy is not interested in half-measures: Rajoelina's latest unilaterally-appointed Prime Minister, Colonel Camille Vital, will have to cede his place to the original "consensus" PM, Eugene Mangalaza. (Mangalaza met with Zafy later the same day and reaffirmed to the ambassador the next day, as he said he had to Zafy, his firm intention to remain Prime Minister.) Zafy said he had rebuffed Vital's efforts to call on him. Likewise, Zafy said he will accept no diminished role for the National Reconciliation Council (designed in the Maputo transition charter, with Zafy later designated president of the Council in Addis Ababa), which was charged with planning constitutional reforms, setting up the CENI electoral commission, and overseeing several steps in the preparation of elections.

13. (C) Zafy believes that France has told TGV that they're "with the international community" now, and no longer back TGV. In his view, a phone call from South African President Zuma was apparently instrumental in convincing Sarkozy to abandon his "support" of TGV. He feels TGV was "mocked" in his French media appearances during a recent visit to Paris (referring to questions about TGV's private life that would be unacceptable in local media), but added later that TGV is "acting like a child" in his continual attempts to seek different answers from various members of the international

community. Asked what compromises Zafy would bring to renewed negotiations, he stated that "even allowing TGV to resume his function as president of the transition (of a consensus government) would be a concession".

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: During his visit in January, AU Chairperson Jean Ping gave Madagascar until February 5 to accept a compromise designed to restart negotiations, based on the Maputo and Addis agreements. Opposition parties have agreed, but Rajoelina remains intransigent, proposing instead that his government remain in place to run the transition period, while offering opposition leaders positions in a proposed "High Council for Monitoring of the Transition". With the AU noisily condemning Rajoelina's coup over the course of their recent summit in Addis Ababa, and most ICG-M members seriously considering sanctions, Zafy (along with his fellow opposition leaders, Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka) now has even less incentive to compromise. All eyes are on Addis Ababa, as the international community and Malagasy opposition movements await Ping's and the AU/PSC's next steps. A meeting of the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M) has been scheduled for February 15. END COMMENT.  
MARQUARDT